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THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

Gloria do Dhoia an rna hárdaib, agus ríoscáin aip an dtalam deaigéil do na dáoib.

LUKE ii. 14.

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CONTENTS.

Modern Worship in Rome	15
The Forged Decretal Epistles—No. III.	16
The Heir of Ballymamus—No. II.	19
Talk of the Road—No. XXI.	22
Freedom of Discussion, and the Court of Queen's Bench	23
The "Rambler" versus Dr. Cahill	24
 CORRESPONDENCE—	
On the Visible Church, by "Philaethes"	25
On Pope Liberius, by "A Truth-seeker"—Postscript to a Roman Catholic	27
Was the Jewish Church the Church of God in its day, by "A Kildare Churchman"	28
Cardinal Wiseman and the Apocrypha	28
Flowers for February	29
Farming Operations for February	29

MODERN WORSHIP IN ROME.

We have hitherto found some difficulty in advertizing as we could have wished to the ritual of the Church of Rome. We were desirous, for many reasons, to direct the attention of our readers to those parts of the ceremonies of that Church which we consider justly liable to censure, and to state the grounds on which our opinions were formed. The pressure of other topics, however, of equal or greater importance, has hitherto engrossed all the available space at our command; and, besides, a sincere feeling of anxiety to deal fairly and impartially with the religious usages of our Roman Catholic readers, imposed some peculiar restrictions on us, arising out of the nature of the subject which we wished to discuss.

Notwithstanding the boasted unity and immutability of the Church of Rome, it is not an easy matter to find out those parts of her ceremonial which are of general obligation, and for which she may be held fully responsible. There are so many rites and usages proper to particular countries, so many peculiar observances, such a multitude of local ceremonies, that we could not feel sure that, however well-grounded our censures might appear to ourselves, the ingenuity of our opponents might not, nevertheless, discover some shift or excuse by which these censures could be evaded. If we cited some objectionable practice, recommended by St. Bonaventura, or some other equally venerable divine, we might be told that the practice in question never was universal, and that it had now become nearly obsolete. If we described any superstitious custom of recent origin, another line of defence would probably be resorted to. "No Church," it might be said, "can be fairly held responsible for the religious practices of all its members. Some indulgence must be allowed to the infirmities of human nature. The Church does not always sanction what she is occasionally obliged to permit." And thus, while professing to be unchangeable, the Church of Rome is able, with dexterous versatility, to accommodate herself to the wants and wishes of each succeeding age, while she has never wanted ingenious defenders to justify every new phase which she may think proper to assume.

It was, therefore, with considerable interest that we read, in the *Tablet* of the 26th of November last, an account of a ceremony which had recently taken place at Rome, in which Pope Pius IX. was the principal performer—namely, the translation of the holy crucifix of Campo Vaccino. The account originally appeared in the French newspaper, *L'Univers*, from which it was translated in the *Tablet*; so that we were here presented, by two unexceptionable Roman Catholic authorities, with a picture of modern Romanist worship, fresh from the Eternal City, and sanctioned by the presence and authority of the Pope himself. But before proceeding further, we must endeavour to give some account of the ceremony, and of the circumstances which occasioned it.

It appears that, over the door of the Mamertine prison in Rome, there has been, for many years, a very ancient wooden crucifix, which has long been held in great veneration by the inhabitants of that city. The writer in the *Univers* states that a constant tradition attributes to Pope Sylvester I. the first establishment of a crucifix in this spot. He does not venture, however, to claim for the

present crucifix such a remote antiquity, probably for the very sufficient reason that its form and artistic character prove it to have been made at a comparatively recent date. The writer then proceeds as follows:

"But whatever may be its origin and antiquity, the worship yielded to the holy crucifix of Campo Vaccino is universal at Rome, and is transmitted from generation to generation. The fathers teach it to the children, and, in all the misfortunes and all the trials of life, the first idea is almost always to have recourse to the holy crucifix, the object of such general veneration, and the source of so many favours. It is, above all, in sickness that the succour of the holy image is invoked with more confidence and more eagerness. It is not uncommon, during the fine season, half an hour after the Ave Maria—that is to say, after the coming on of night—to meet in the streets little bands of the faithful, going devoutly bare-footed, and reciting the chaplet in a loud voice. These are the workmen and artisans who, after the labour of the day, repair in pilgrimage to the holy crucifix, to beg the cure of a parent, of a friend, of a neighbour, dangerously ill."

We beg the attention of our readers to the foregoing extract, which we have copied *verbatim* from the *Tablet*, and in which we have merely underlined one or two sentences. We have here a faithful representation, fresh from Rome, of the state of religion in that city at the present day, supplied to us by an unprejudiced Roman Catholic witness; and how sad and melancholy is the picture! We will not now enter upon the question of the unlawfulness of image worship, further than to repeat our solemn and deliberate conviction, which we have expressed at length in a former number of this journal,* that any use of images in religious worship is forbidden by God himself in the Second Commandment, and that those who use them incur the risk of great and deadly sin. But we cannot forbear from one or two remarks, in connection with our present subject.

Some of our Roman Catholic correspondents have endeavoured to excuse the practice of image worship in their Church by the plea that the images are only used as *helps* to devotion, and that the worship always terminates on the object represented by the image. This excuse passes over altogether in silence the Scriptural prohibition of image worship; and, further, we do not believe that one Roman Catholic in a hundred ever makes the metaphysical distinction between the image and the Being represented by it, which the excuse presupposes. We need no better proof of this fact, than the passage from the *Tablet* which we have quoted above. The "ancient wooden crucifix" is throughout spoken of as the object of the people's prayers; but no hint is given that the thoughts of the worshippers ever ascended to God the Father, or the Lord Jesus Christ. No idolater of ancient Rome ever bowed down before his wooden idol with more earnestness than the modern Roman seems to bend his knees before the wooden crucifix which has taken its place.

Again, it is instructive to notice the wide-spread influence of this melancholy perversion of true spiritual religion. The "worship yielded to the holy crucifix" is said to be "universal" at Rome. Parents and children, young and old, come before it to present their homage. In the trials and misfortunes of life their "first idea" is to have recourse to the holy crucifix as the "source of the favours" which they hope to receive. Can it be possible that the people of Rome are taught to believe that God will only hear the prayers which are offered up before one particular piece of senseless wood? Do they imagine that the crucifix itself can hear their prayers, or be a "source of favour" to any of its worshippers? If not, why do they make it their "first idea" to "invoke the succour" of this holy image, as if the piece of wood could help them in sickness or any other emergency? But if, as we would fain hope and believe, they are not so utterly besotted as to imagine this, whence arises the earnestness of their devotion to this particular image? Is not the ear of the Almighty open to receive the prayers of sincere Christians, in whatever place they are offered up? When our Blessed Lord was giving his disciples a command how they should pray, did he tell them to set up a wooden crucifix and pray before it or to it? No! but his command was this—

"Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."—(Matt. vi. 6.)

But we must return to the crucifix of the Campo Vaccino. The sanctuary in which it was placed was, it seems, too small to receive the numerous faithful who came every hour to venerate it, and a more suitable and spacious place must be found. Rome has, we are told, three hundred and sixty-five Churches—one for every day of the year; but these were not enough; they wanted a new one for the relic which happens just now to be in fashion. Here, however, a sad dilemma arose. The wooden crucifix belonged, as was natural, to the guild of joiners, carpenters and other workers in wood, who considered it their most precious treasure. They felt the need of a new sanctuary for the object which they so much prized; and yet they could not be persuaded to remove it from a place which it had occupied for centuries, over the Mamertine prison, where, according to tradition, St. Peter and St. Paul were confined. At length, the difficulty was solved, by what the writer in the *Univers* calls "a happy inspiration," which was neither more nor less than the simple expedient of breaking down a wall, and thus making an opening into a pretty crypt under the Church of St. Joseph. Here, therefore, a marble altar was erected, at the back of which, in a circular niche, the holy crucifix was to be placed.

When the new locality was ready, the obvious course would have been, to transfer the sacred relic at once from its old to its new abode, which were only a few yards apart. But the guild of carpenters were averse to this summary method of procedure. They desired the translation of the crucifix to be made with all due solemnity, "and with a proof, which will remain in the history of the pious image" (we quote *verbatim* from the *Tablet*) "as one of the most glorious testimonies of the gratitude of the people of Rome." Accordingly, they would be content with nothing less, than that the crucifix should first be carried across the entire city, in solemn procession, to the Church of St. Charles, where it abode fifteen days. The time, however, was not idly spent. "One may well say" writes the editor of the *Univers*, "that the holy crucifix, during the fifteen days that it passed in the Church of St. Charles, has fulfilled the office of an eloquent preacher." The writer's veneration, it would seem, is so intense, that he unconsciously personifies the object which is so dear to his heart. The crucifix is a holy crucifix, a pious crucifix, it fulfils the office of an eloquent preacher, it is the source of health to the sick, of succour to the afflicted, of aid to the distressed. Could more be said of St. Peter or St. Paul, if they were alive?

At length Sunday, November 6, arrived, on which the crucifix was to be borne back in procession to its new sanctuary. And now the laudable exertions of the guild of carpenters were rewarded with the presence and co-operation of an eminent personage, whose aid they had not ventured to expect. "A few days before Sunday, November 6, it began to be whispered in Rome that the Holy Father, Pope Pius IX., would assist at the procession. On Sunday morning people went even farther, and said that the Holy Father would preach to the people on the arrival of the holy image. One may judge of the joy and astonishment of the population on receiving this good news." The Popes, it seems, have been so little in the habit of addressing the people from the pulpit, that it was no wonder that the good citizens of Rome were rather astonished on the present occasion. Public rumour, however, for once proved a true prophet. The Pope did actually preach and take part in the procession, which is thus described by the writer in the *Univers*:

"The sacred pageant was opened by a detachment of firemen, and closed by a platoon of Capitoline guards. All the streets were canopied. An immense multitude filled them, giving the most expressive signs of veneration, respect, and love. All the city of Rome followed, or beheld as it passed the ancient and well-beloved crucifix, the worship and devotion of which their ancestors had bequeathed to them, and which they will transmit to their children of the most distant generations. When the shrine had arrived at the base of the stairs of the Church of San Luca, at some paces from the flight of steps on which the Holy Father stood, in rochet, stole, and pallium

* See CATHOLIC LAYMAN for November, 1852, vol. i, pp. 122, 123.

† Vide especially the letters of "Sadrach" in the CATHOLIC LAYMAN for February and April, 1853, vol. ii, pp. 21, 45.

of red velvet, he bowed before the holy crucifix, and venerated it devoutly."

Here we must pause. If our readers do not feel that the whole scene which has been just narrated is utterly opposed to the nature of true spiritual religion, as it is described in the New Testament, any attempt of ours to convince them of the fact must, we fear, prove unavailing. We can scarcely wonder at the intense devotion displayed by the people of Rome towards their favourite crucifix, when we see the Pope himself, their supreme, infallible guide in all matters of religion, as earnest in his devout veneration as the most ignorant member of his flock. But what we do wonder at, is, how any persons, with the Word of God in their hands, can believe for one moment that the religion of Rome in the present day, such as it has been just described, is the religion of the Bible. We have seen how the whole population of the city, headed by their chief spiritual guide, assembled together for a solemn act of devotion. And to what are their prayers addressed? To the Most High God, who declares himself to be a hearer of prayer? No! but to "an ancient and well-beloved wooden crucifix!"

We earnestly request our Roman Catholic readers to read over their Douay Testaments, and if they can there find any mention of St. Peter or St. Paul acting as the Pope is above represented to have done—if they can find any one instance of religious worship offered to an image, or the name of a crucifix so much as mentioned—we will freely acknowledge ourselves to be in error. We say nothing, for the present, of the prohibition of image worship in the Second Commandment; we will simply ask our readers one question:—if the worship of a crucifix be indeed an essential part of Christianity—nay, if, as we have seen, it be considered the most essential part of religion in Rome—how came it to pass that there is not one word about it in the Bible? Does not this one fact prove how widely the modern Church of Rome has departed from the simplicity of the Scriptural and Apostolic worship? And if this be so, another question arises, are her members safe in remaining in a church which has corrupted the pure faith and practice which she received, and which has gone so widely astray from God's ordinances? That worship only is pleasing in God's sight which is rendered according to his own revealed will; and what that will is our Blessed Lord has plainly declared to us (John iv. 24). "GOD IS A SPIRIT, AND THEY THAT WORSHIP HIM, MUST WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH."

DECRETAL EPISTLES.—No. III.

WE showed in our last number that the Popes of the ninth century did adopt the forgeries which were put upon the early Popes; did quote them; and did appeal to them as being inspired by God for the government of his Church.

Our object is now to show how those Popes of the ninth century, even where they did not expressly mention the forgeries, did carry out and support the various novelties which the forgeries were designed and contrived to introduce. And here we shall choose for our examples those things which are most important in themselves, and which Protestants and Roman Catholics are equally concerned to understand.

INFALLIBILITY.

The keystone of the Roman system is infallibility. Had the forgeries anything to do with that?

In the third letter forged for Pope Felix I. he is made to say—"This holy and apostolic Church of Christ, mother of all Churches, which is proved by the grace of Almighty God never to have erred from the path of apostolic tradition, nor has succumbed, depraved by heretical novelties, but, as in the beginning she received the rule of Christian faith from her authors, the chiefs of the apostles of Christ, she remains unhurt for ever, according to the divine promise of the Lord himself, the Saviour," (1) (quoting Luke, xxii. 31, 32).

This same passage is repeated over again in the letter forged for Pope Marcus, where it is thus introduced:—"The holy Roman Church, which has always remained, and the Lord providing for it, and the blessed apostle Peter bringing aid, will remain for the future immaculate," (2) &c. And in consequence, these forged letters lay it down in various places, that all are to follow the faith of Rome.

Here is certainly a fair statement of the claim of Roman infallibility. Some Roman Catholics may think it a pity that it is only a forgery of the ninth century.

They may also think it a pity that none of the Popes of the first eight centuries made any such claim. But this we undertake to affirm, having read all their letters.

We have often shown in our paper the weakness of the arguments in support of the infallibility of Rome. Now, we go far;—we ask Roman Catholics to consider whether the claim itself be not wholly based on forgery and fraud?

(1) Hinc sancta et apostolica mater omnium Ecclesiarum Christi Ecclesia, quia per Dei Omnipotentem gratiam, a tramite apostolica traditionis numquam errasse probatur, nec ab hereticis novitatis depravata successubit, sed ut in exordio normam fiduci Christianae percepit ab auctoribus suis, apostolorum Christi principibus, illibata fine manus, secundum ipsius Domini salvatoria divinam pollicitationem, &c.—Labbe and Coss., vol. i., p. 311.

(2) Sancta Romana Ecclesia, quae semper immaculata mansit, et Domine prouidens, ut in futuro Adiectis vixit fructu, in futuro manebit.—Labbe and Coss., vol. ii., p. 471.

But if it will satisfy Roman Catholics to learn, that, as soon as the forgery appeared, the following Popes did take it up, and carry it out with all their might, we can, at least, give this much satisfaction to any one who will be satisfied with it:—

Pope Nicolas I., in his eleventh epistle to Photius, says of Popes—"For the Holy Spirit, whose vessels they were, could not give forth any but sweet things by those whom it had filled." (3)

In his 70th epistle (to "Hincmar and the other bishops in the kingdom of Carolus," in France), Pope Nicolas says—"She herself (Rome) from the time that the Christian religion began to be spread, has preserved unmitigated the things which she once received in Peter, her patron and founder, and has taught them uncorrupt through the other climates of the world: nor was any found, in so many revolutions of ages, who detracted from her traditions, or presumed to oppose them." (4)

Those who can believe this latter statement, may believe the forgeries themselves.

Pope Nicolas goes on (p. 473)—"Whether were we ever found inventors of any novelty? Whether have we ever transmitted any other things than those which pertained to their salvation, and to the common state of the Church? Whether were we ever heretics? For although, indeed, we do not deny that we are sinners, thanks to God, we by no means recognise ourselves as polluted by the dregs of any error." (5)

Was Pope Nicolas guilty of no novelty in imposing these forged epistles on the Church? Was Pope Liberius polluted with no dregs of error, when he condemned Athanasius, and became an Arian? (See our answer to a "Truth-seeker" in this number, p. 28.)

Of course, Pope Nicolas does not fail to draw the practical conclusion from all this. "The entire number of all believers seeks for doctrine, demands the integrity of faith, the loosing of crimes, from this holy Roman Church, which is the head of all Churches." (6)

INSPIRATION OF THE POPE.

Here we may fitly introduce the claims which Pope Nicolas makes, to speak by divine inspiration and revelation. For it is only by God putting thoughts into the heart, and words into the mouth, that man can be infallible.

In his eighth epistle to the Greek Emperor Michael, Pope Nicolas says—"We are going to write to your potency, the Lord inspiring us." (7)

Again, in his forty-seventh epistle to Carolus Calvus, giving directions to a council what inquiries they were to make about some priests, he tells them, "To act in such a way that the thing may be laid before us (the Pope), by the relation of all the bishops who assemble; and thus, then, without doubt, wait for what the Lord shall have revealed, to be defined by us." (8)

But his successor, Pope Hadrian II., brought this doctrine to perfection in his thirteenth epistle to Lotharius, King of Lorraine in France. "With unweary exertions, opening our apostleship's mouth, full of the grace of the seven-fold Spirit. . . O renowned King Lotharius, we admonish your excellency with paternal affection." (10)

And when Pope Hadrian II. took on himself to give away the kingdom of Lotharius, when Lotharius was dead, writing to the great men of that kingdom, he professes to anticipate the devil with his directions—"which precepts humbly obeying, like all who from the beginning pleased God, you may be able to be saved, the Lord saying in the Gospel, 'If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make one abode with him.'" (11) Where observe that the Pope requires for his own commands in temporal matters, that obedience which Christ requires for his own word; and the Pope says this was the way of salvation from the beginning!

In the same way Pope Nicolas I., in his ninth epistle to Michael the emperor, applies to those who receives the

(3) Spiritus enim Sanctus, quorum vasa isti fuerunt, non potest nisi dulcia per hos, quos repleverit, eructare.—Labbe and Coss., vol. viii., p. 373.

(4) Cum ipsa, ex quo coepit Christiana religio dilatari, quae semel in Petro patrino ac institutore suo suscepit, immunitata tenuerit, et incorrupta per alia climata mundi docuerit: nec apparuerit quisquam per tot saecula seculorum curricula, quis ejus traditionibus derogavit, aut obire presumpserit.—Labbe and Coss., vol. viii., p. 472.

(5) Numquid nos aliquicun novitatis inventores exitimus? Numquid alii nisi que ad salutem ipsorum, et ad communem Ecclesie statum pertinebant, transmisimus? Numquid nos heretici aliquando fuimus? Nam licet nos peccatorum quidem esse non denegimus, quomlibet tamen errorum feci pollutos, Deo gratias, minime recognoscimus.—Labbe and Coss., vol. viii., p. 473.

(6) Universitas credentium ab hac sancta Romana ecclesia, quae caput omnium est Ecclesiarum, doctrinam exquirit, integratatem fidei deposit, criminum solutionem. . . Labbe and Coss., vol. viii., p. 283. Ep. 6, to Photius.

(7) Ad potentiam vestram, inspirante Domino, scripturi.—Labbe and Coss., vol. viii., p. 293.

(8) Agite quo nobis omnium episcoporum qui convenient relata pandantur; et ita deinde quod Dominus revelaverit a nobis definitum procul dubio praestolamini.—Labbe and Coss., in Con. Suesa, vol. VIII., p. 814.

(9) Os Apostolatus nostri, septiformis Spiritus gratia plenum . . . Om inclite rex Lothari, vicibus indefessis aperientis, excellentiam tuam paterno imponens affectu.—Labbe and Coss., vol. viii., p. 911.

(10) Quibus humiliter obedientes, sicut omnes qui ab initio Deo placuerunt, salvi esse possitis, dicente Domino in Evangelio, si quis diligenter me, &c., from John 14, 23.—Labbe and Coss., vol. viii., p. 917.

Pope's commands, the words of our Saviour, Luke xi. 28.—"Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." (12)

Our readers may have some notion, from this instance, of what the religion of Rome was in the middle ages, and how it was established.

They may see why Pope Nicolas was so anxious to have it thought that the forgeries put on the early Popes were divinely inspired; it was that his own words, in their turn, should pass for inspired too. Here we have the origin and the extent of the Roman claims to infallibility.

SUPREMACY BY DIVINE RIGHT.

The primacy and supremacy of Rome over all Churches is another fundamental point of the papacy.

The Forgers made Anacletus say, in the third epistle—"This holy and apostolic Roman Church obtained the primacy and pre-eminence of power over all Churches, not from the apostles, but from the Lord and Saviour himself." (13)

Again, they make Pope Julius II. say (in his second epistle), of Rome—"In which the Lord placed the primacy of the whole Church." (14)

We might quote more, but space prevents us; let us see, with equal brevity, how Pope Nicolas applies it. In his 70th epistle (to Hincmar, and other bishops), Pope Nicolas says—"On account of the primacy of the Roman Church, conferred on Peter by the gift of Christ." (15)

And in his eighth epistle to Michael the Emperor—"Therefore, those privileges were given to this holy Church by Christ; they were not given by synods." (16)

When we come to examine how genuine documents have been altered and "cooked," it will be seen how probable it is, that this doctrine also owes its origin to the forgeries.

A POPE'S PRAYER.

But we cannot leave this eighth epistle of Nicolas without showing a specimen of a Pope's prayer, which occurs in it. We ask our readers to consider first this prayer of St. Paul for those whom he taught, taken from the Douay Bible, Ephesians, i. 18, &c.—"The eyes of your heart (being) enlightened, that you may know what the hope is of his calling (Christ's), and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power towards us, who believe." Consider now and compare the Pope's prayer:—"We beseech Almighty God, that he who has disclosed to you the mystery of the knowledge of himself, would grant you also to know fully his own dispositions, by which the holy Church manages her secret, and what, and how great, and what sort the privileges of the Roman Church are, and from whom they took their beginning." (17)

In these two prayers, reader, you may see the whole difference between the times of Apostles and the times of Popes.

Neither may we leave out the threat which helps out the Pope's prayer—"If you set up your efforts against the privileges of the Roman Church, beware lest they be turned against you; it is hard for thee to kick against the goad." (18) Our readers will recognise these last words as those which our Saviour himself spoke to Paul; and these those the Pope takes to himself. (Acts ix. 5, Douay Bible.)

Neither can we omit Pope Nicolas's assertion, that the General Council of Nice acknowledged that all things were conferred on her (the Roman Church) by the word of the Lord;" (19) which every one, who ever read the Council of Nice, knows to be false. Pope Nicolas quotes this from a letter of Pope Boniface, which, we shall show hereafter, lies under strong suspicion of being forged.

POPES' POWER OF CONDEMNING TO HELL.

But to proceed:—A consequence of primacy given by God, and directed by divine inspiration, is spiritual power—not the power of excommunication exercised in the early Church, but something more, as we shall see.

Our readers will remember the passage which we quoted in our first number from the forged epistle of St. Clement. "In the judgment of God, he shall suffer the torments of eternal fire, who shall have neglected the decrees of the Church." (20) It would be strange if the Popes who estab-

(12) "Magis beati sint qui audiunt verbum Dei, et custodiunt." Itaque audite serenissime Imperator voces Legatorum nostrorum, vel voices literarum nostrarum audite patienter, audite tranquille. . . . Labbe and Coss., vol. viii., 327.

(13) Haec vero sacrosancta Romana et Apostolica Ecclesia, non ab Apostolis, sed ab ipso Domino Salvatore nostro primatum obtinuit, et eminentiam potestatis super universas Ecclesias. —Labbe and Coss., vol. i., p. 528.

(14) Ubi Dominus Ecclesia totius posuit principatum.—Labbe and Coss., vol. i., p. 480.

(15) Christi munere propter primatum Ecclesia Romana in beato Petro concessum. —Labbe and Coss., vol. viii., p. 473.

(16) Ista igitur privilegia huius sanctae Ecclesiae a Christo donata; a syndicis non donata. —Labbe and Coss., vol. VIII., p. 314.

(17) Sed Rogamus Omnipotentem Deum, ut qui sua cognitionis vobis reservavit mysterium, tribuat quoque noste ad plenum suas dispositiones, quibus sancta Ecclesia moderatur arcanum, et quae sint, vel quanta, et qualia privilegia Ecclesia Romana, et ex quo cooperant exordium. —Labbe and Coss., vol. viii., p. 314.

(18) Si . . . contra privilegia Ecclesiae Romanae nisu eriguntur, caete ne super vos convertantur. Durum quippe est vobis contra stimulum calicrare.—Vol. viii., p. 314.

(19) Omnia denique noverat hunc, Domini sermone, concessa.—Labbe and Coss., vol. viii., p. 808, Ep. 42, to all bishops of Gaul.

(20) In Judio Dei, igitur eterni tormenta sustinebunt, qui Ecclesiasticis decretis neglexerit.—Labbe and Coss., vol. i., p. 97.